

In the Specification:

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(b) and the revised amendment practice effective July 30, 2003, please delete the entire paragraph beginning on page 8 at line 17 and replace the deleted paragraph with the following replacement paragraph marked up to show changes made relative to the immediate prior version.

Referring now to Figure 1, a ferrule 10 of one advantageous embodiment of the present invention is depicted. Since the ferrule is molded as described below, the ferrule includes first and second ferrule body portions 12, 14 joined along a parting line 16 that extends lengthwise between the opposed front and rear surfaces 18, 20 of the ferrule. In this regard, the first and second ferrule body portions cooperate to form both a lengthwise extending shaft portion 22 and an enlarged rear portion 24. The rear portion 24 and the shaft portion 22 are sized differently such that a shoulder 23 is defined therebetween. The first body portion 12 and the second body portion 14 are also sized differently such that the parting line 16 comprises a ledge 17 that extends longitudinally (i.e., in the lengthwise direction) over a majority of the length of the ferrule 10 between the front surface 18 and the rear surface 20. As shown, the ledge 17 extends longitudinally between the front surface 18 and the shoulder 23. Although the ferrule can have various shapes and sizes, the ferrule of one advantageous embodiment has a substantially rectangular shape in lateral cross-section.